Patriarch Kirill celebrates thanksgiving at St. George's in Beirut

[gallery]

On November 14, 2011, in the course of his official visit to the Patriarchate of Antioch, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visited St. George's Cathedral in Beirut. There was a multitude of the faithful – Orthodox Arabs and people from the Russian diaspora in Lebanon.

Patriarch Kirill led the congregation in a thanksgiving. Among the worshippers were Patriarch Ignatios of Great Antioch and All the East and several hierarchs of the Church of Antioch.

After the service of prayer, Patriarch Kirill was greeted by Patriarch Ignatios. In his response, Patriarch Kirill said in particular,

'Last time I was here, the cathedral was in ruins. Now looking at this restored beauty with joy and gratitude to the Lord, I can testify that God has not allowed the violation of the holy place, and the church has survived and has been restored to its original beauty.

'A visit to Lebanon always makes an imprint in one's soul because this land is part of the Holy Land. The foot of apostles stepped here and the Christian Church originated from here. The Church of Antioch saw great deeds performed here such as works of holy fathers, outstanding church authors and thinkers. She saw the work of prominent church canonists and jurists who participated in creating the laws of the Byzantine Empire known as the Code of Justinian.

'This land is also known for its defense of Orthodoxy against heresies and schisms. It was a place on which the fate of the Universal Church depended. This greatness of the Church of Antioch, the greatness laid down by the efforts of Sts Peter and Paul, has survived through centuries to be manifest today in a special way bearing witness to Christian values in the multicultural society of Lebanon, Syria and other countries of the East.

'We all belong to one Orthodox Church in which all national and political frontiers are removed. We live the same life wherever we may be physically – in Lebanon, Syria, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus or other country, because we are united by one Church which is the Universal Orthodox Church which has preserved the greatness and holiness of the Tradition coming from the holy apostles'.

Addressing the Russian-speaking members of the Russian Orthodox parish, which has existed in Beirut

under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Antioch since 1948, Patriarch Kirill said, in particular,

‘Many of you live in mixed families, many of you are involved in the life of a bilingual culture, and the very belonging to two cultures is a great richness. But there is a condition for the bilingualism and biculturalism to become richness: by no means should one culture and one language oust the other. Those of you who come for Russian Orthodox services are people who realize clearly that under no condition the native tongue and culture should leave your life. And the Church helps you to preserve your bilingualism and biculturalism which help you to enrich your personality’.

Patriarch Kirill thanked the head of the Church of Antioch for the support he gave to the Russian Orthodox parish in Beirut.

As a token of the communion in prayer at the cathedral of Beirut, Patriarch Kirill presented the church with an icon of Christ sitting on the throne, saying, ‘This is a symbol of kingship, a symbol of the spiritual power of His word. It is a symbol of the power a person acquires when touching Christ. I will be glad if this icon is kept in this holy place as a symbol of my love of all those who serve in this cathedral and who worship here’.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/54934/